

CLAIMS

1. A data entry system comprising a hand held data entry unit, said hand held unit comprising a reading sensor for sensing commands and/or data and for producing input signals in response to said sensed commands and/or data, rewritable storage for information relating to selectable items, a controller connected to receive and process said input signals from said sensor for responding to said commands to control said hand held unit and/or to said data to select a said item and a display screen for displaying a user readable representation of said commands and/or stored information for said selected item, and a telecommunications interface for telephonic transmission of information relating to a selected item or items from said storage to a remote processing centre and for telephonic transmission of information relating to selectable items from said remote processing centre to said storage.
2. A data entry system according to claim 1, wherein said telecommunications interface is integral to said hand held unit.
3. A data entry system according to claim 2, wherein said hand held unit includes a rechargeable power source, means being provided for recharging said power source.
4. A data entry system according to claim 3, comprising a base unit separate from said hand held unit, wherein said base unit includes a charger unit and said base unit and said hand held unit are provided with respective interconnectable electrical connectors for recharging said rechargeable power source.
5. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims comprising a base unit separate from said hand held unit, wherein said base unit and said hand held unit are provided with a wireless data link which is operable for bidirectional data transfer between said hand held unit and said base unit, and wherein said base unit includes a said telecommunications interface for telephonic transmission of information relating to a selected item or items from said storage to

a remote processing centre and for telephonic transmission of information relating to selectable items from said remote processing centre to said storage.

5 6. A data entry system according to claim 5, wherein said wireless data link comprises, in said base unit and said hand held unit, optical transmitters and/or receivers which cooperate when said hand held unit is in said rest position to provide a two way optical data link for transferring data from said hand held unit to said base unit and/or 10 from said base unit to said hand held unit.

7. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said telecommunications interface is an interface for connection to a wireless telephone network.

15 8. A data entry system according to claim 7, wherein said telecommunications interface is a cellular telephone network interface.

9. A data entry system according to claim 7, wherein said 20 telecommunications interface is a satellite telephone network interface.

10. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said telecommunications interface includes a modem.

25 11. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said hand held unit comprises one or two manually operable switches for scrolling said display in a first and/or second direction for selectively displaying information for respective selectable or 30 selected items from said storage.

12. A data entry system according to claim 11, wherein operation of said first and/or second switches in predetermined operational states of said hand held unit causes predetermined functions other than scrolling functions to be performed.

35 13. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims,

wherein said display comprises a touch sensitive screen, said controller being arranged to display a menu of user selectable items and to be responsive to a location at which said screen is touched for input of a user selection of a said menu item.

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14. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims comprising a reading sensor for reading coded data, wherein said controller is arranged to access the stored information for selectable items to determine natural language characters or images corresponding 10 to the coded data for display.

15. A data entry system according to claim 14, wherein said coded data comprises bar codes and/or binary dot codes and said sensor is a bar code and/or dot code reader.

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16. A data entry system according to any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein said reading sensor is a camera.

17. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims. 20 wherein said controller is user programmable to cause said captured data to be displayed on said display either in a first orientation suitable for reading displayed data when said hand held unit is held in a user's right hand, or in a second orientation suitable for reading displayed data when said hand held unit is held in a user's left hand. 25 said controller being responsive to user programming operations including scanning of an appropriate command code using said reading sensor.

18. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims 30 wherein said display has a substantially rectangular display screen with a longitudinal axis arranged substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of said hand held unit.

19. A data entry system according to any of the preceding claims, 35 comprising means enabling audio telephone conversations with a remote station.

20. A data entry system according to claim 19 wherein said hand held unit includes a speaker and/or microphone and switching means permitting said hand held unit to be used as a telephone handset.

5 21. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said hand held unit is configured as an elongate unit such that it may be held by a user in the manner of a pen or quill with said reading sensor being located in a reading head at or adjacent to one end of said hand held unit.

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22. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said reading sensor is located in a reading head which is releasably attached to said hand held unit.

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23. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims additionally comprising, separate from said hand held unit:

- means for displaying a plurality of selectable items with associated data sources for user selection of an item by operation of said hand held unit; and

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- a remote processing centre for processing user selections transmitted from said hand held unit.

24. A data entry system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said hand held unit is programmable remotely from said processing centre with information relating to selectable items.

25. A merchandising system comprising a data entry system according to claim 23 or claim 24, wherein:

- said selectable items are merchandisable items; and

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- said remote processing centre initiates processing of user orders of said selectable merchandisable items.

26. A data entry system according to any one of claims 1 to 24 or a merchandising system according to claim 25 comprising a verification device in the form of a verification card or like carrier carrying a verification bar code and/or dot code for verification of a user identity.

27. A data entry system according to any one of claims 1 to 24 or a merchandising system according to claim 25 or claim 26 comprising a carrier for a plurality of data and/or command codes for association with means for displaying a plurality of selectable items, wherein said carrier carries a plurality of codes, each for a respective one of a plurality of natural language and/or numeric characters and a plurality of commands for controlling operation of said data entry or merchandising system, each code being associated with a visual representation of the corresponding natural language or numeric character or command and/or of a graphical representation thereof.

28. A data entry system or a merchandising system according to claim 27 wherein said codes are bar and/or dot codes.

15 29. A data entry system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

30. A merchandising system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

